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U.S. POPULATION MOBILITY AND DISTRIBUTION

CHARTS ON RECENT TRENDS

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FOREWORD

This chartbook draws together information on major features of population trends in the United States. The charts and maps are intended to illustrate mobility and distribution of people. They do not present a complete picture of current trends. They are not intended to support any special hypotheses regarding the nature or consequences of such trends.

Many of the illustrations are new. Some have been published before. Most of them are derived from surveys of the Bureau of the Census. The commentaries and most of the illustrations were prepared by the Population Studies Group of the Economic Development Division, Economic Research Service.

We hope that this information will be especially useful to the Subcommittee on Internal Migration of the President's Council for Urban Affairs; to the President's Council for Rural Affairs; to officials of the Department of Agriculture; and to others interested in rural and urban economic development.

M. L. Upchurch

M. L. Upchurch
Administrator
Economic Research Service

Washington D. C.

December 1969

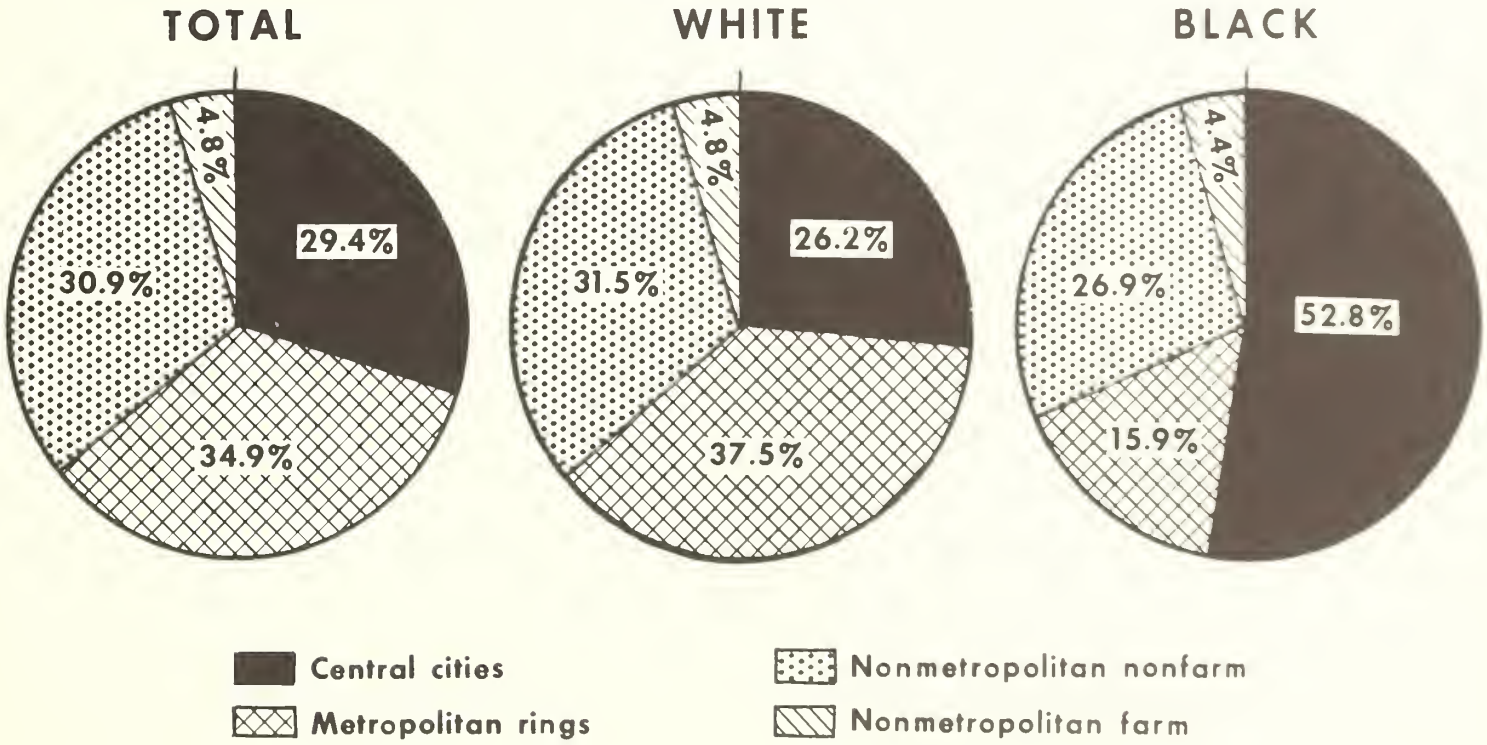
RESIDENTIAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION

In 1968, 64 percent of the American people lived in 212 metropolitan areas (those defined for the 1960 Census), each containing a central city or dual central cities with 50,000 or more population. The black population was somewhat more likely than the white to be concentrated in metropolitan areas--69 percent against 64 percent.

However, within metropolitan areas, the distribution of the population differed greatly by race. Whereas only a fourth of the total white population lived in central cities, fully half the blacks did so. The major residential location of whites is the suburban and rural territory surrounding central cities, where 3 out of 8 whites now live.

In nonmetropolitan territory, most of the population resides in small cities and towns or in rural nonfarm residences. Only a seventh of the nonmetropolitan residents now live on farms. This is true of both whites and blacks.

RESIDENTIAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION BY RACE, 1968



DATA FROM BUREAU OF THE CENSUS.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NEG. ERS 7080-69 (10) ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

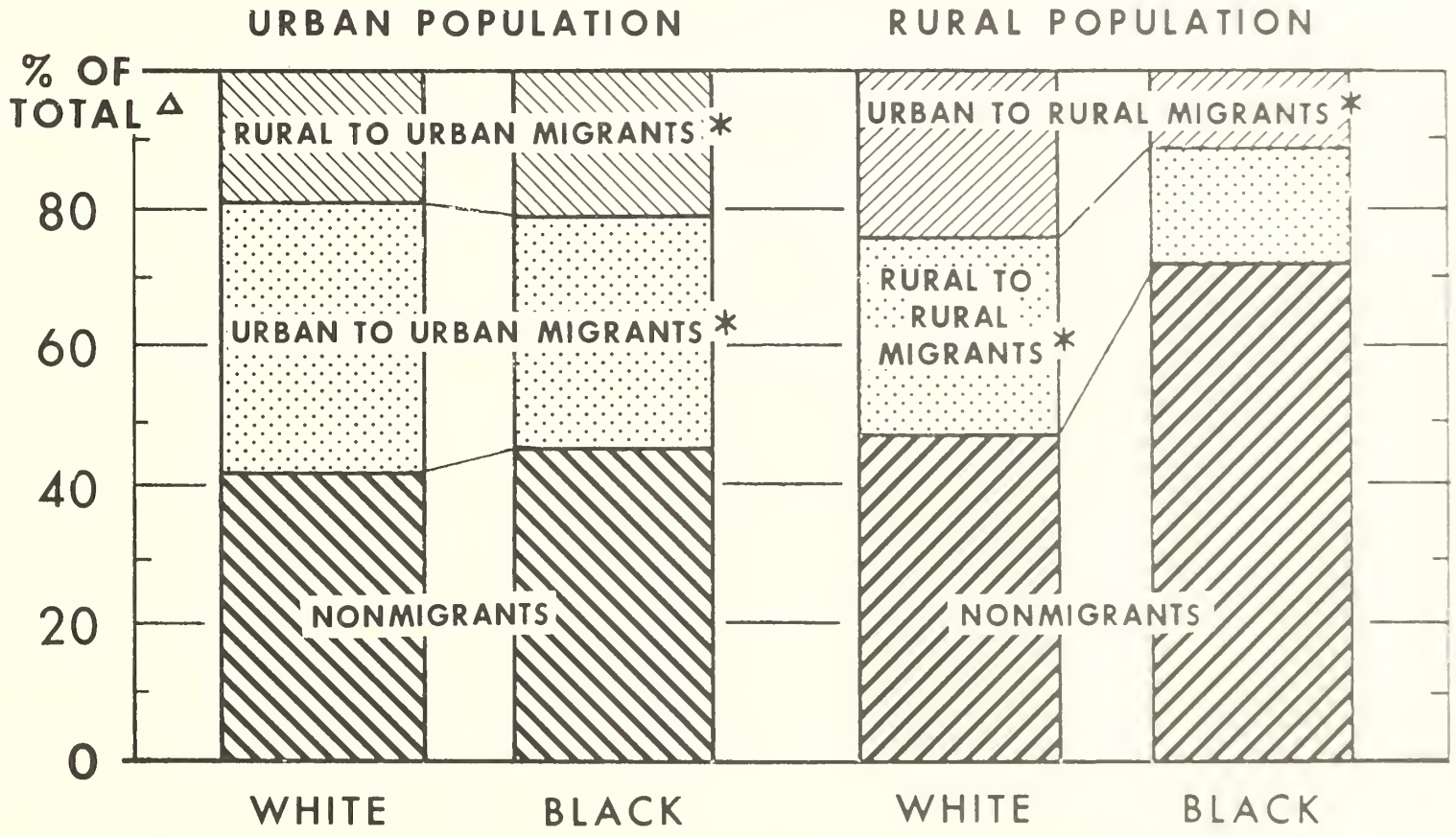
POPULATION BY RESIDENCE AND MIGRATION STATUS

In 1967, more than 40 percent of the urban population 14 years old and over consisted of nonmigrants--people who had never lived more than 50 miles away from their current residence. Nearly another 40 percent were migrants but were of urban background. Twenty percent of the urban population was of rural childhood origin.

There was no meaningful difference between the white and black urban populations in the proportion who were migrants and nonmigrants, or of urban or rural background.

In rural areas, however, there were wide differences between the races in migrant history. Nearly three-fourths of the blacks were nonmigrants, compared with less than half the whites. Nearly a fourth of the rural whites were of urban origin, whereas just a tenth of the blacks were. These differences reflect the fact that, although there is much interchange between urban and rural areas among white people, the movement of blacks is more highly one-directional, from rural to urban. When rural blacks move, they are less likely to go to another rural area than to a city. If blacks are from cities, they do not often move to a rural environment.

POPULATION BY RESIDENCE AND MIGRATION STATUS, 1967



△ POPULATION 14 YEARS OLD AND OVER BY CURRENT RESIDENCE AND RESIDENCE AT AGE 16 OR EARLIER.
* MIGRANTS ARE PERSONS WHO HAVE EVER LIVED 50 MILES OR MORE AWAY FROM THEIR CURRENT RESIDENCE.
PRELIMINARY DATA FROM THE 1967 SURVEY OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NEG. ERS 7099-69 (11) ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

CENTRAL CITY RESIDENTS IN POVERTY AREAS, BY MIGRATION STATUS

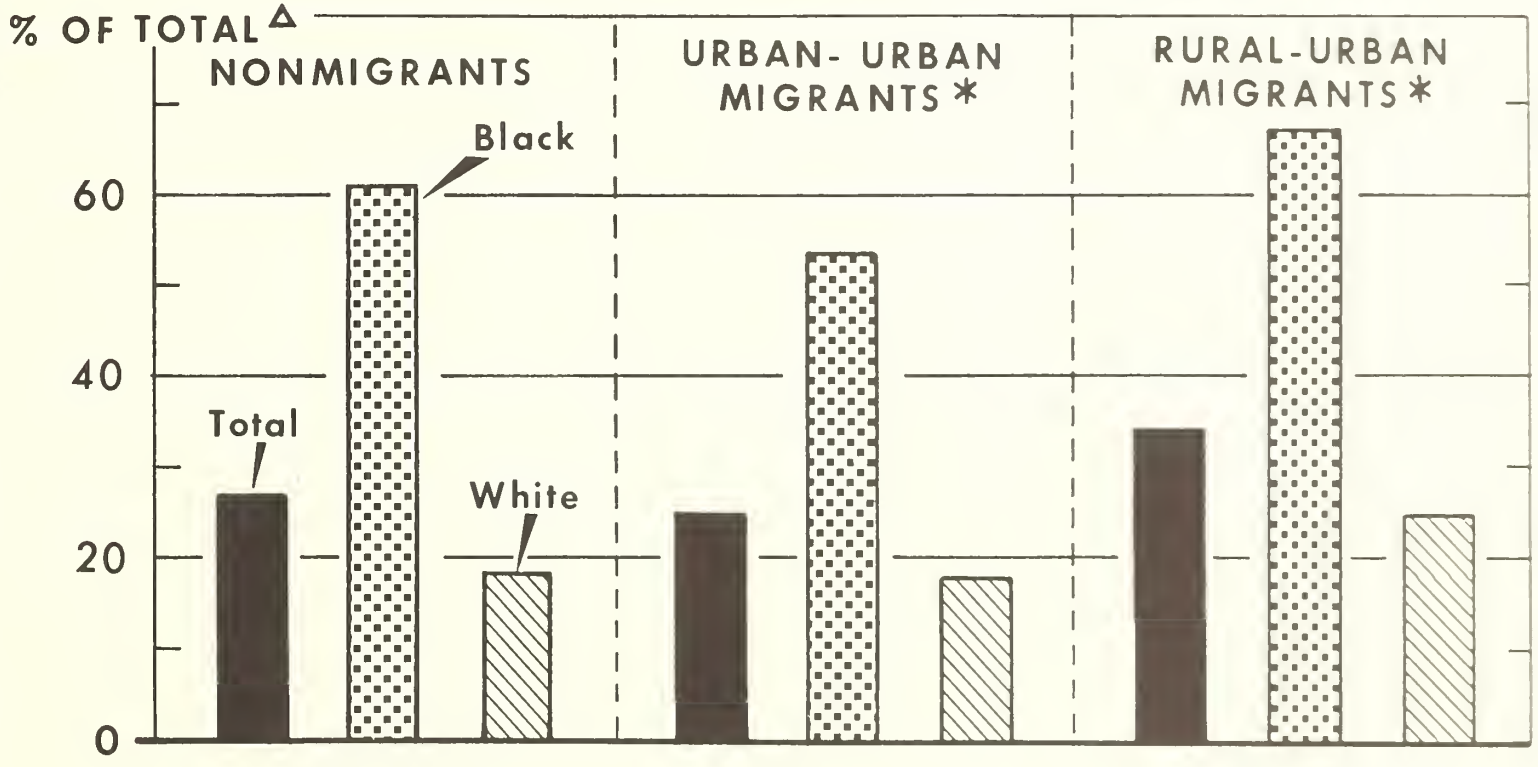
In 1967, about 28 percent of the central city population of medium and large-sized metro areas lived in poverty areas. The remainder was in sections not characterized by very low income and other features of widespread poverty.

Migrants of rural origin who had moved to central cities were more likely than nonmigrants or migrants of urban origin to live in poverty areas. This was true for whites and blacks, but more so for the blacks. Two-thirds of the black rural-to-urban central city residents were in poverty areas. Among blacks who had moved to central cities from some other urban background, half were living in poverty areas. Black nonmigrants were more likely to be in poverty areas than were urban-to-urban migrants, but less likely than rural-to-urban migrants.

For the white population, differences in location of the various migrant-status groups were not great, although they were in the same direction as those for blacks, with rural-to-urban migrants being the group most likely to live in poverty areas.

The most striking feature of the data is the high percentage of blacks who were living in poverty areas, regardless of their migration background. The black group with the lowest poverty area concentration was twice as likely to be in a poverty area as was the white group with the highest poverty area location.

PERCENTAGE OF CENTRAL CITY POPULATIONS THAT LIVE IN POVERTY AREAS, BY MIGRATION STATUS, 1967



△ POPULATION 14 YEARS OLD AND OVER LIVING IN CENTRAL CITIES OF METRO AREAS OF OVER 250,000, BY RESIDENCE AT AGE 14 OR EARLIER. * MIGRANTS ARE PERSONS WHO HAVE EVER LIVED 50 MILES OR MORE AWAY FROM THEIR CURRENT RESIDENCE.

PRELIMINARY DATA FROM THE 1967 SURVEY OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY.

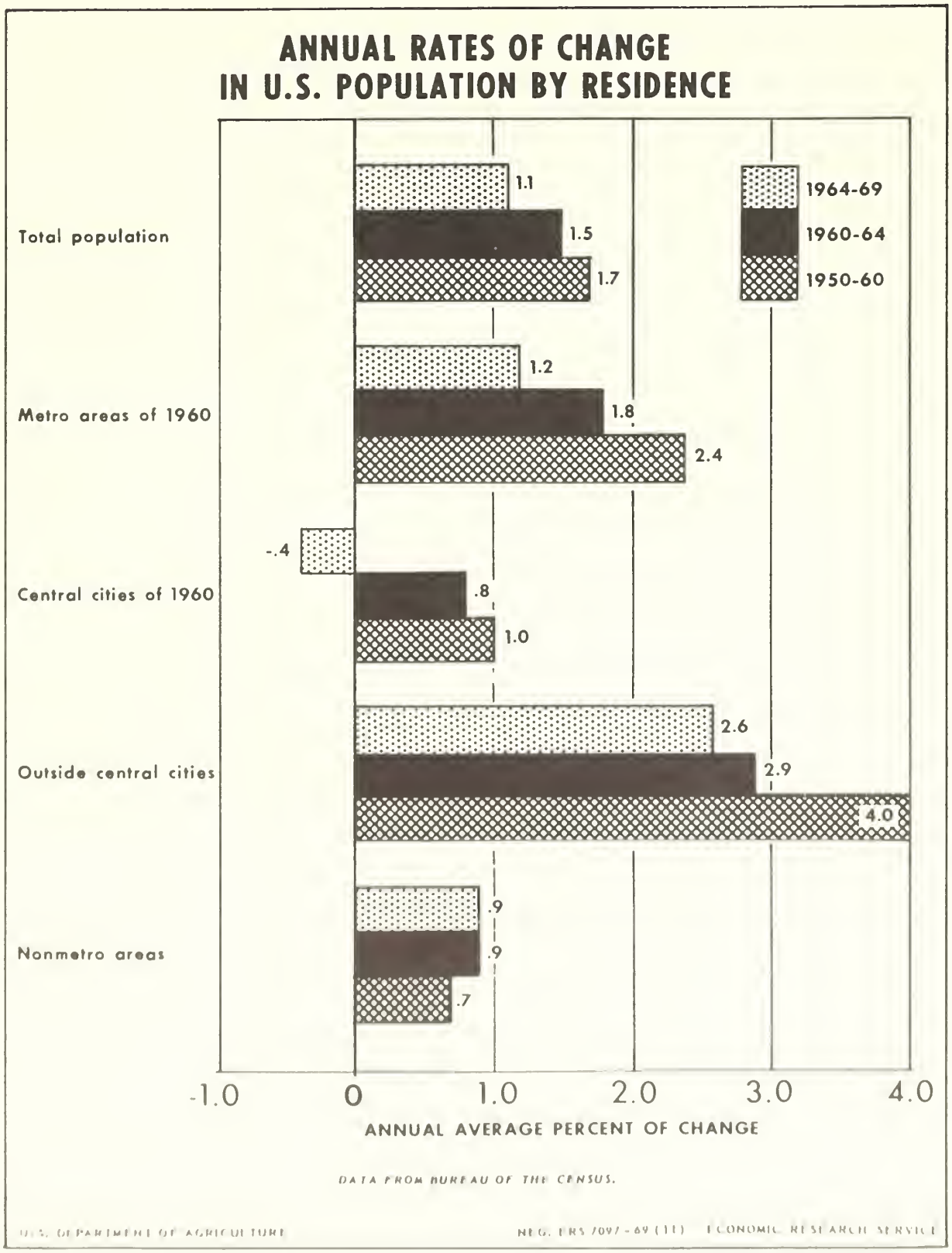
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NEG. ERS 7105-69 (11) ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

POPULATION CHANGE BY RESIDENCE

U.S. population growth has slowed, especially in the last 5 years as the birth rate has dropped. The reduction is especially obvious in metropolitan areas, where the annual rate of increase from 1964 to 1969 (1.2 percent) was only half that in the 1950's.

Within metro areas, the central cities declined in population from 1964 to 1969--within their 1960 boundaries. (Data are not available on population changes in areas annexed to cities since 1960.) Growth continued to be heavy in the metro rings outside of the central cities, but still less than in the 1950's.

Nonmetropolitan areas, on the other hand, increased in growth during the 1960's over the previous decade. Their annual rate of growth from 1964 to 1969, however, was still just three-fourths as high as that of the metro areas.


ANNUAL RATES OF CHANGE
IN U.S. POPULATION BY RESIDENCE
Total population
Metro areas of 1960
Central cities of 1960
Outside central cities
Nonmetro areas
1964-69
1960-64
1950-60
1.1
1.5
1.7
1.2
1.8
2.4
-.4
.8
1.0
2.6
2.9
4.0
.9
.9
.7
-1.0
0
1.0
2.0
3.0
4.0
ANNUAL AVERAGE PERCENT OF CHANGE
DATA FROM BUREAU OF THE CENSUS.
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
NEG. ERS 7097-69 (11) ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

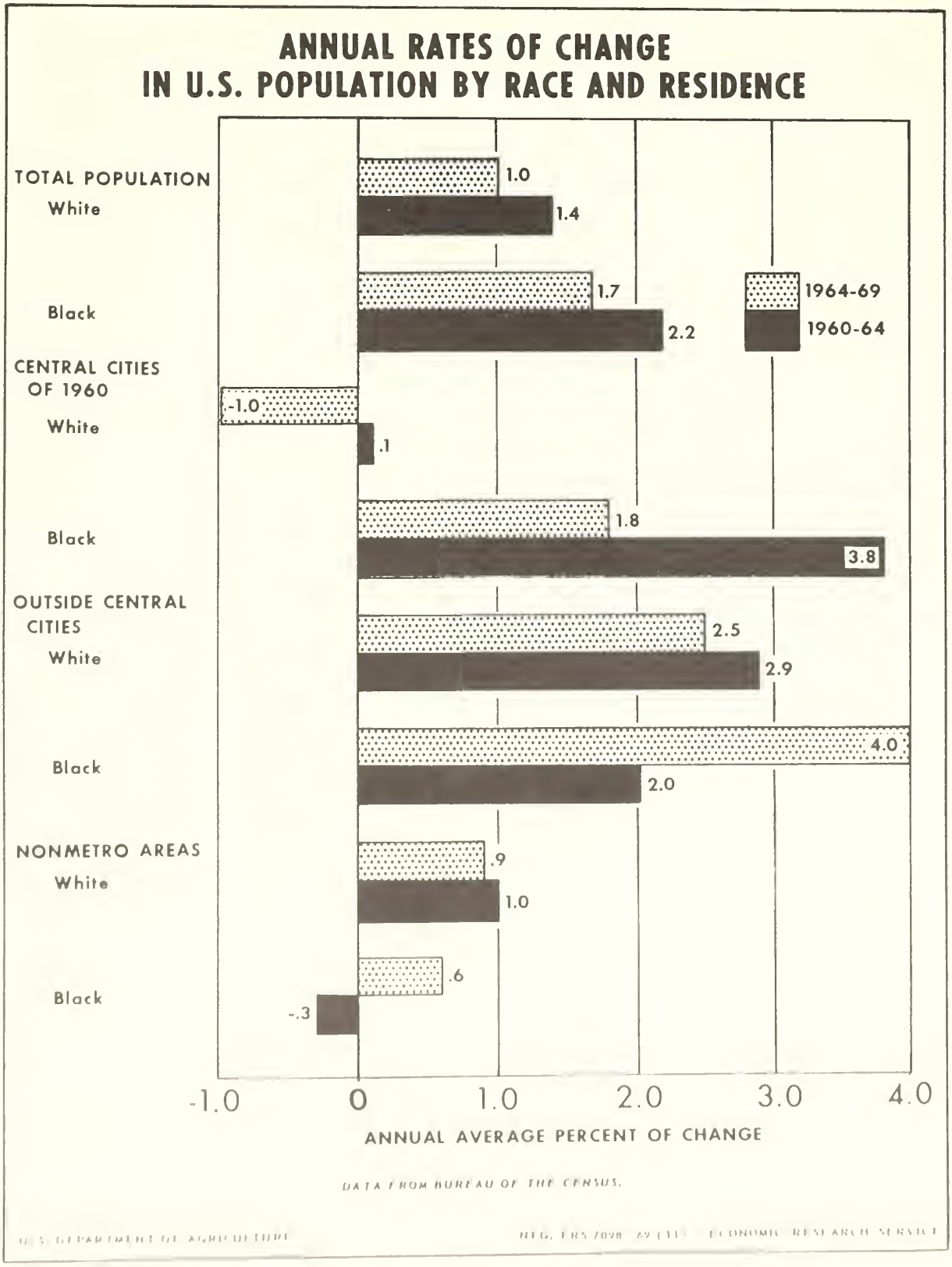
POPULATION CHANGE BY RACE AND RESIDENCE

In the 1960's, the black population has had an annual rate of growth about 60 to 70 percent higher than that of the white population. But this national difference is the sum of widely differing internal patterns of growth by the two major racial groups.

In the metropolitan central cities (as defined in 1960), the white population has declined substantially since 1964, whereas the black population has increased. But the population growth rate of the blacks in central cities appears to have been only half as high since 1964 as in earlier years of the decade--because of less inmigration and reduced birth rate.

In the metropolitan rings--which include the suburbs--the white and black populations are both growing rapidly. During 1964-69, the black growth rate was higher than the white for the first time (4.0 percent vs. 2.5 percent). However, the black growth rate is occurring on a smaller population base, and it would be many years before a continuation of these rates could greatly increase either the black proportion of the total suburban population, or the suburban proportion of the total black population.

In nonmetropolitan areas, the white population is increasing at a more rapid rate than the black. However, the black nonmetropolitan population appears to have begun to increase in the last 5 years, whereas in the early 1960's it was declining.


ANNUAL RATES OF CHANGE
IN U.S. POPULATION BY RACE AND RESIDENCE
TOTAL POPULATION
White
1.0
1.4
Black
1.7
2.2
1964-69
1960-64
CENTRAL CITIES OF 1960
White
-1.0
.1
Black
1.8
3.8
OUTSIDE CENTRAL CITIES
White
2.5
2.9
Black
4.0
2.0
NONMETRO AREAS
White
.9
1.0
Black
.6
-.3
-1.0
0
1.0
2.0
3.0
4.0
ANNUAL AVERAGE PERCENT OF CHANGE
DATA FROM BUREAU OF THE CENSUS.
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

MOBILITY OF THE POPULATION

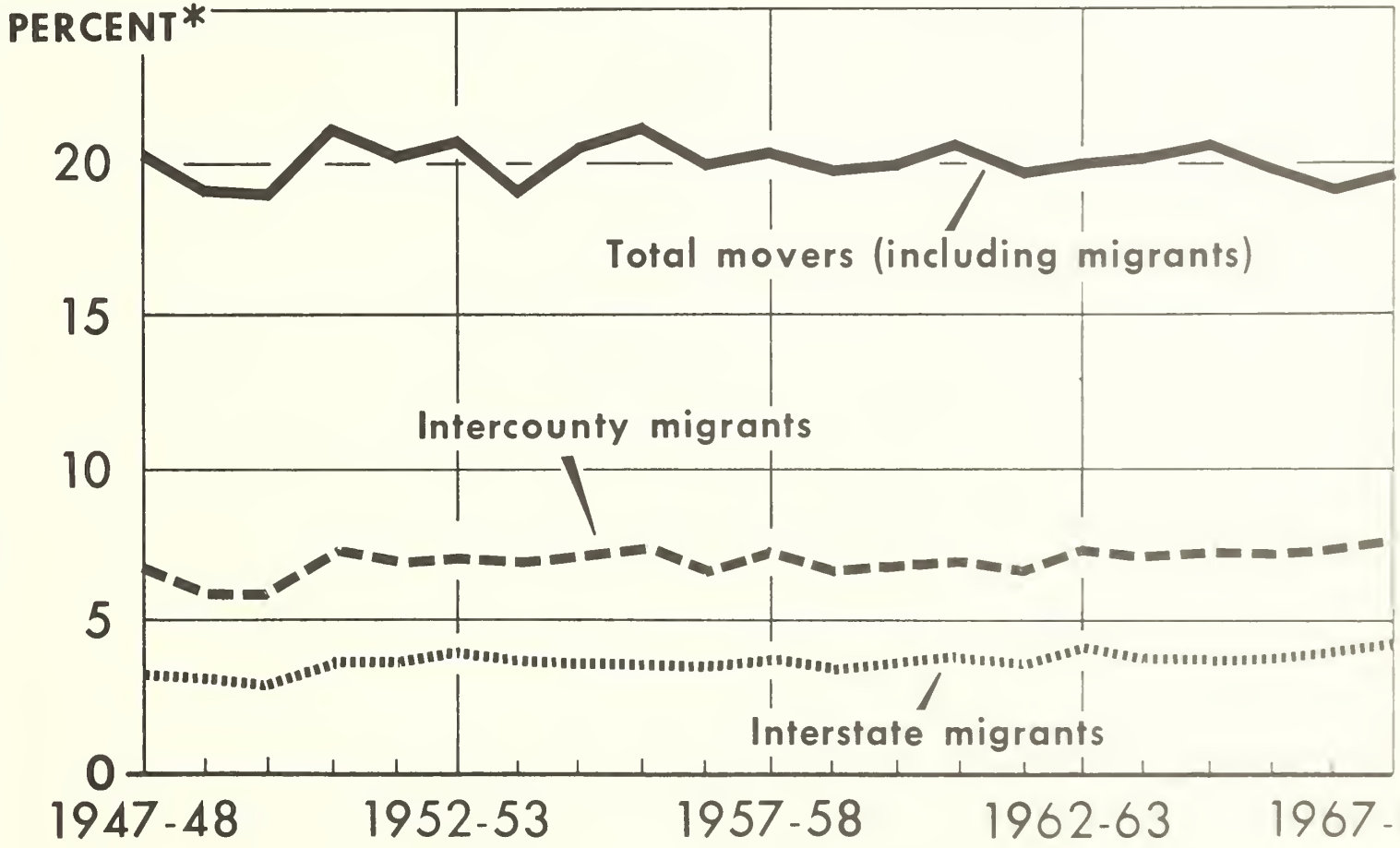
The rate at which Americans move--whether from one residence to another, one county to another, or one State to another--has been one of the most stable social processes in recent American history.

Each year since 1947, about 19 to 21 percent of the people have changed their house, apartment, or other place of residence. During these years, the level of the economy and the housing supply has varied, the marriage rate has varied, periods of peace and war have alternated, sharp changes in agriculture have come and gone, and the pattern of racial interaction and laws of equal access to housing have changed. But the overall frequency of movement has scarcely varied.

The proportion of people moving from one county to another has ranged between 6 and 8 percent a year. Of this group, somewhat more than half move far enough to cross a State boundary.

A high rate of mobility from one residence to another is a characteristic feature of our society, and, indeed, of all open societies. It is not the overall level of movement and migration that has created the problems popularly associated with migration in recent years, but rather the circumstances and directions of the particular moves and the people who have made them.

POPULATION MOBILITY RATES



*PERCENT OF POPULATION ONE YEAR OLD AND OVER WHO EITHER MOVED OR MIGRATED.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NEG. ERS 7082-69 (10) ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

MOBILITY BY AGE

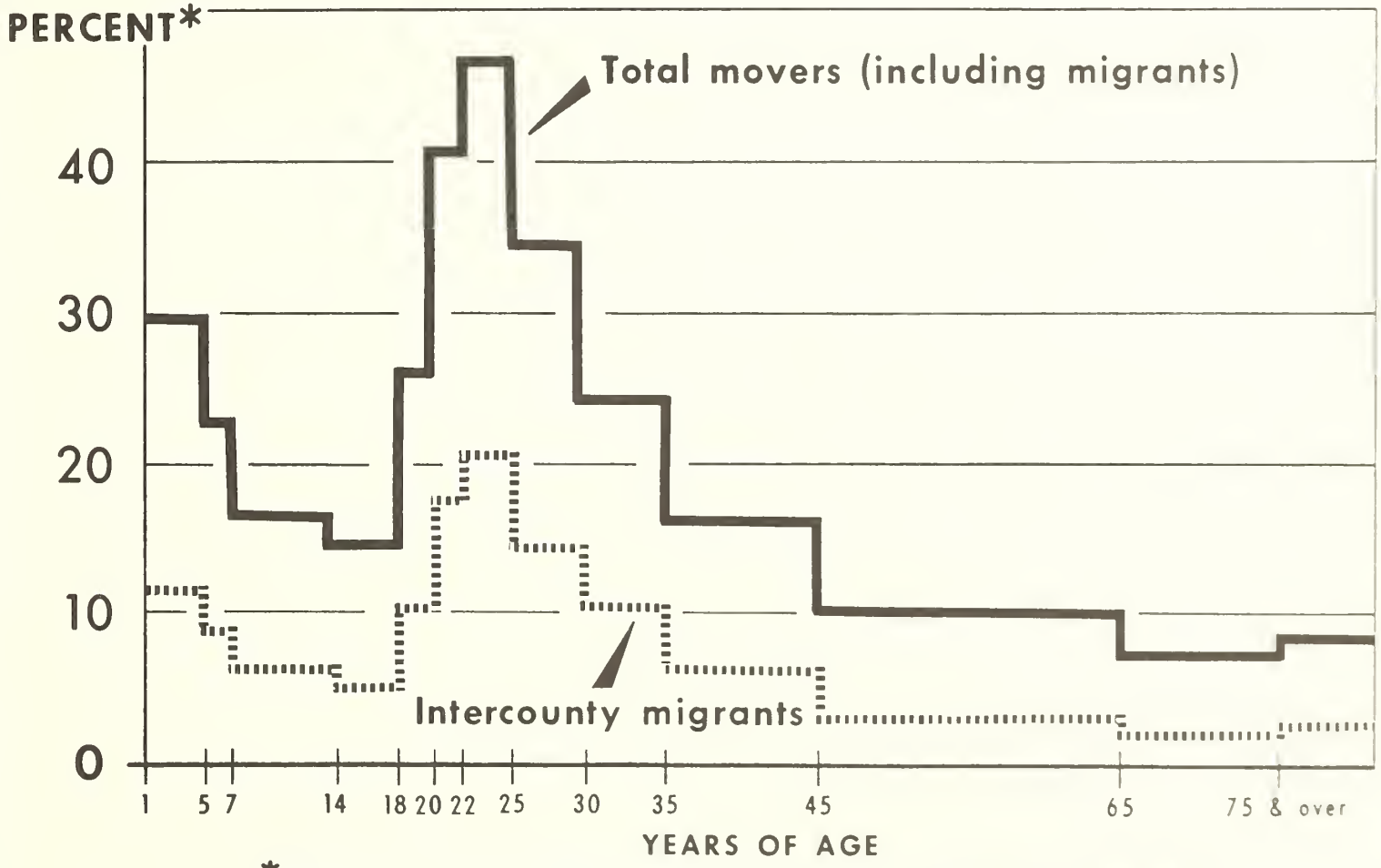
No personal, social, or economic characteristic is so highly correlated with movement and migration as is age of the individual.

Whereas about 19 to 21 percent of all people move each year, at 22 to 24 years of age--when people are leaving college, getting married, having their first children, or starting career jobs--the rate reaches about 47 percent a year. It is also over 40 percent for young adults 20 to 21 years old. After the mid-20's, the frequency of movement diminishes with age until age 65 and over, when only 7 to 9 percent of the people move annually.

The same age pattern applies to intercounty migrants, whose moves typically take them to a different community, or in many cases a different State. At the peak age of migration--22 to 24 years--a fifth of the population migrates annually. By middle age, the rate declines to just 3 percent.

The movements of children generally correspond to the stage in the life cycle of their parents. Very young children are frequent movers, but teenagers still of school age are only half as likely as preschool children to move.

RATES OF MOBILITY BY AGE, 1967-68



*PERCENT OF POPULATION IN EACH AGE GROUP WHO EITHER MOVED OR MIGRATED. DATA FROM BUREAU OF THE CENSUS.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NEG. ERS 7081-69 (10) ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

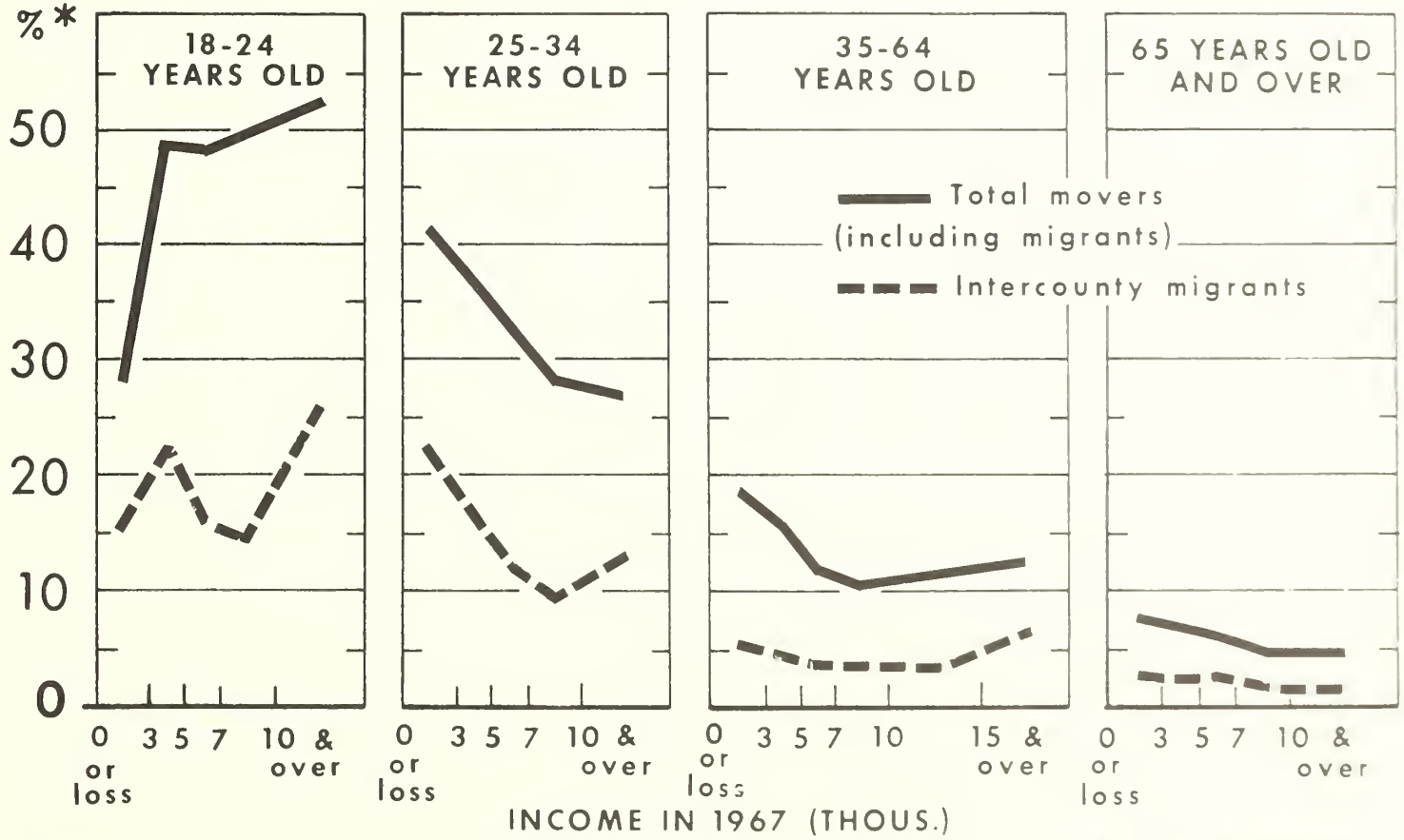
MOBILITY BY AGE AND INCOME

Men of low income (except those under 25) are more likely to move or migrate than are those of the same age with moderate income. Low-income men above age 25 are also more likely to move than are high-income men, but they are not necessarily as likely to make moves of some distance, such as from one county to another.

On the other hand, at ages 18 to 24, the lowest income group among men (under $3,000) has much less propensity to move within a year than do the moderate and upper income groups. The reason may be that those least likely to have moved in this age group are still in school--either high school or college--and thus typically attached to the parental home and not earning income except on a part-time basis.

Despite the financial burden that a move may entail, persons of low income appear to move more often than do those with greater income, except at very young adult ages. Age is a greater determinant of the rate of mobility than is income.

MALE MOBILITY RATES BY AGE AND INCOME, 1967-68



* *PERCENT OF NONINSTITUTIONAL POPULATION IN SPECIFIED AGE GROUP WHO EITHER MOVED OR MIGRATED. DATA FROM BUREAU OF THE CENSUS.*

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NEG. ERS 7101-69 (11) ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

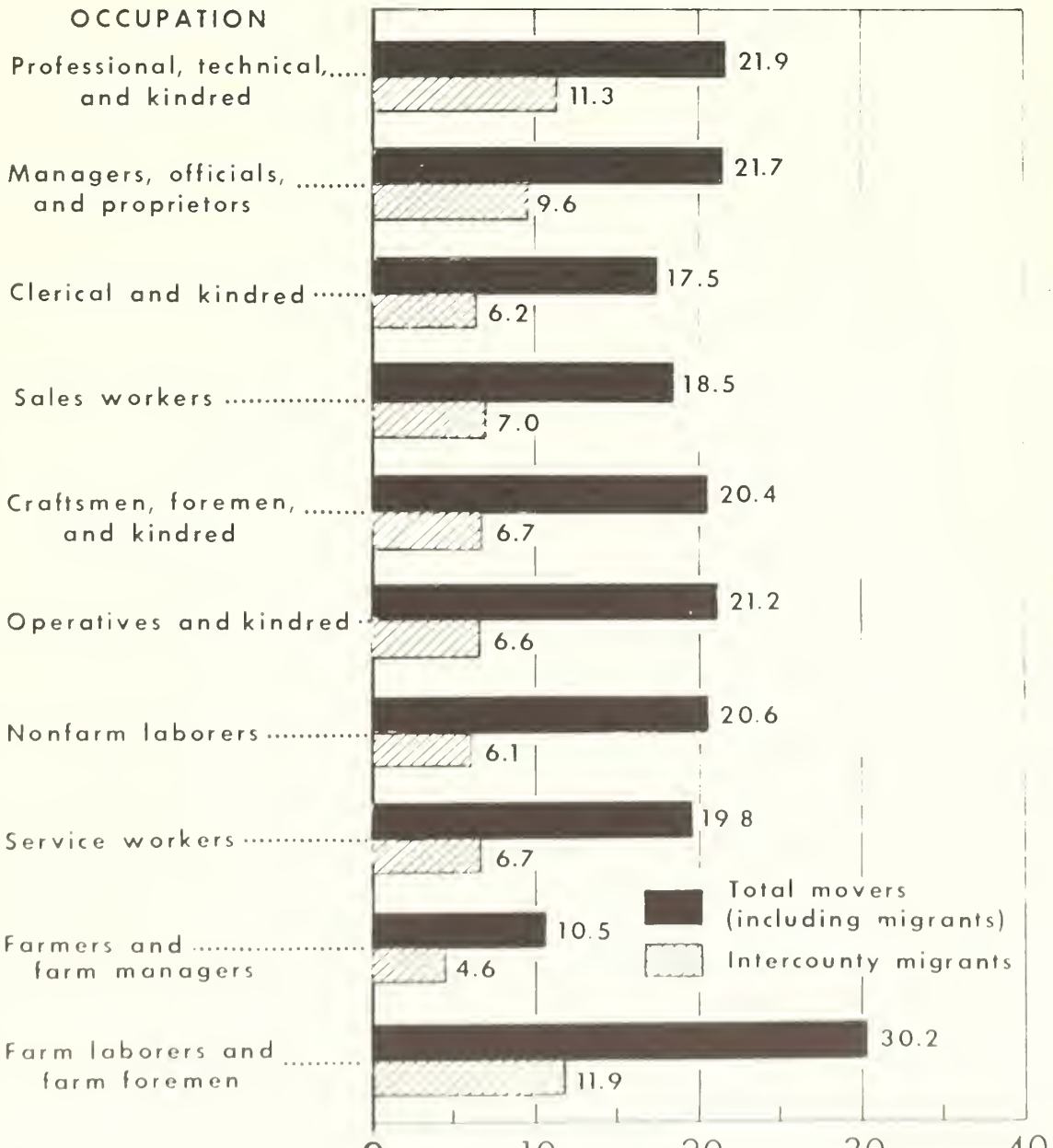
MOBILITY BY OCCUPATION

Mobility rates are not widely different among major occupation groups, except for farmers and farm workers. In 1968, the percentage of nonfarm male workers, 14 to 64 years old, who changed their place of residence within a year varied only from 17.5 percent for clerical workers to 21.9 percent for professional, technical, and kindred workers.

Farmers had a mobility rate of only 10.5 percent. This is not surprising in view of the land-based nature and high ownership rates of their occupation. Farm laborers, on the other hand, had a 30.2 percent rate of mobility, indicating a high degree of transience in their work.

In most occupations, only a third of the workers who moved went far enough to change counties. But the proportion was close to half among professional and technical workers, managers, officials and proprietors, and farmers.

MALE MOBILITY RATES BY OCCUPATION, 1968



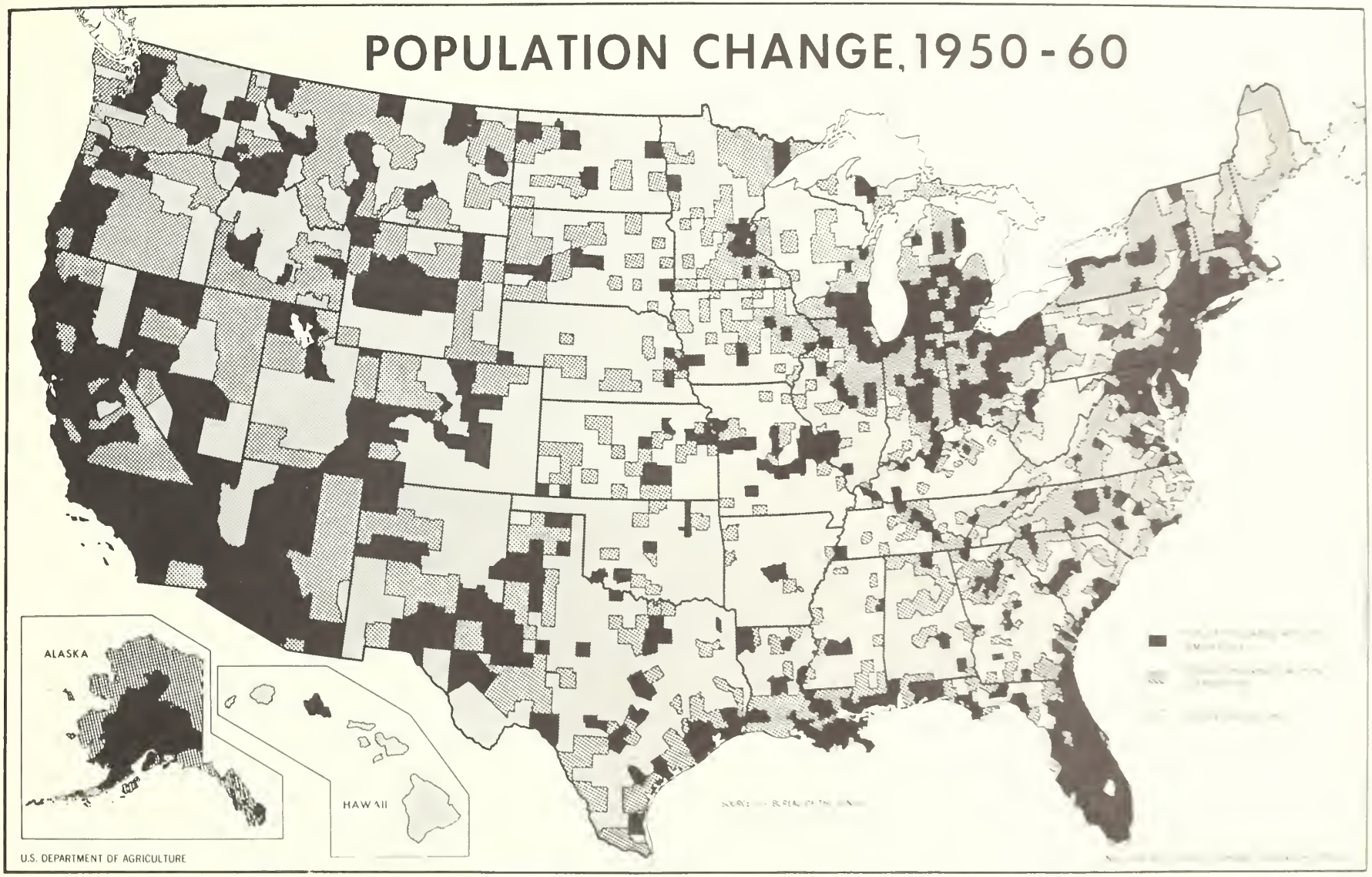
DATA FROM BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

POPULATION CHANGE, 1950-60

From 1950 to 1960, half the counties in the United States declined in population, despite the fact that the total population increased by an unprecedented amount.

The declining counties were overwhelmingly rural in character, and covered large areas of the Great Plains, southern and western Corn Belt, Lower South, and Appalachian-Ozark regions.

In these areas, the loss stemmed from outmigration, usually caused by rapid declines in agricultural or coal mining employment that were not offset by gains in manufacturing or other industries. Areas of inmigration and rapid population increase were mostly urban, such as the metropolitan belt from Washington to Boston, the Lower Great Lakes industrial areas from Cleveland to Milwaukee, the Pacific Coast and Southwest, and the Florida peninsula.

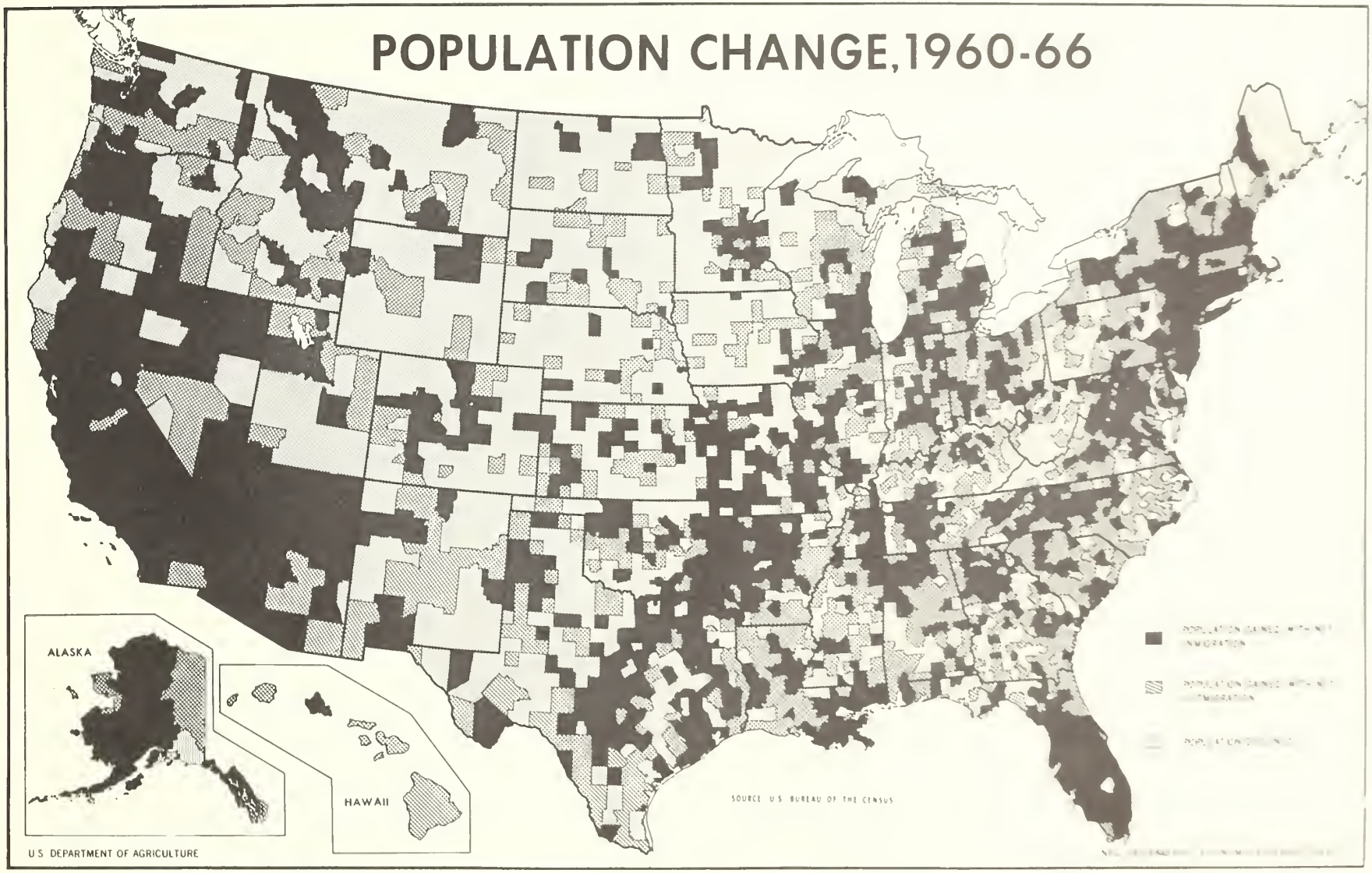

POPULATION CHANGE, 1950 - 60
ALASKA
HAWAII
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

POPULATION CHANGE, 1960-66

From 1960 to 1966, the number of counties losing population was considerably reduced, compared with the 1950's. The number of areas in which conditions became attractive enough to produce a net inmigration of people was greatly increased.

Improved retention of population was particularly noticeable in the South, despite the predominance of public attention that was focused on the continued movement of people away from southern farms. In a number of areas--such as the Piedmont sections of the Carolinas and Georgia, the Tennessee Valley, and the Ozark and Ouachita Mountain sections--the development of nonfarm jobs not only offset the movement from farms, but even attracted inmigrants to many counties that had previously been declining in population.

On the other hand, the Great Plains and many adjoining areas of the Corn Belt and the Mountain States continued to show a predominance of population decline. Nonagricultural industrial development in these areas was not sufficient in scope or scale to fully counter employment declines in farming and other resource-based industries.


POPULATION CHANGE, 1960-66
ALASKA
HAWAII
SOURCE U.S. BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

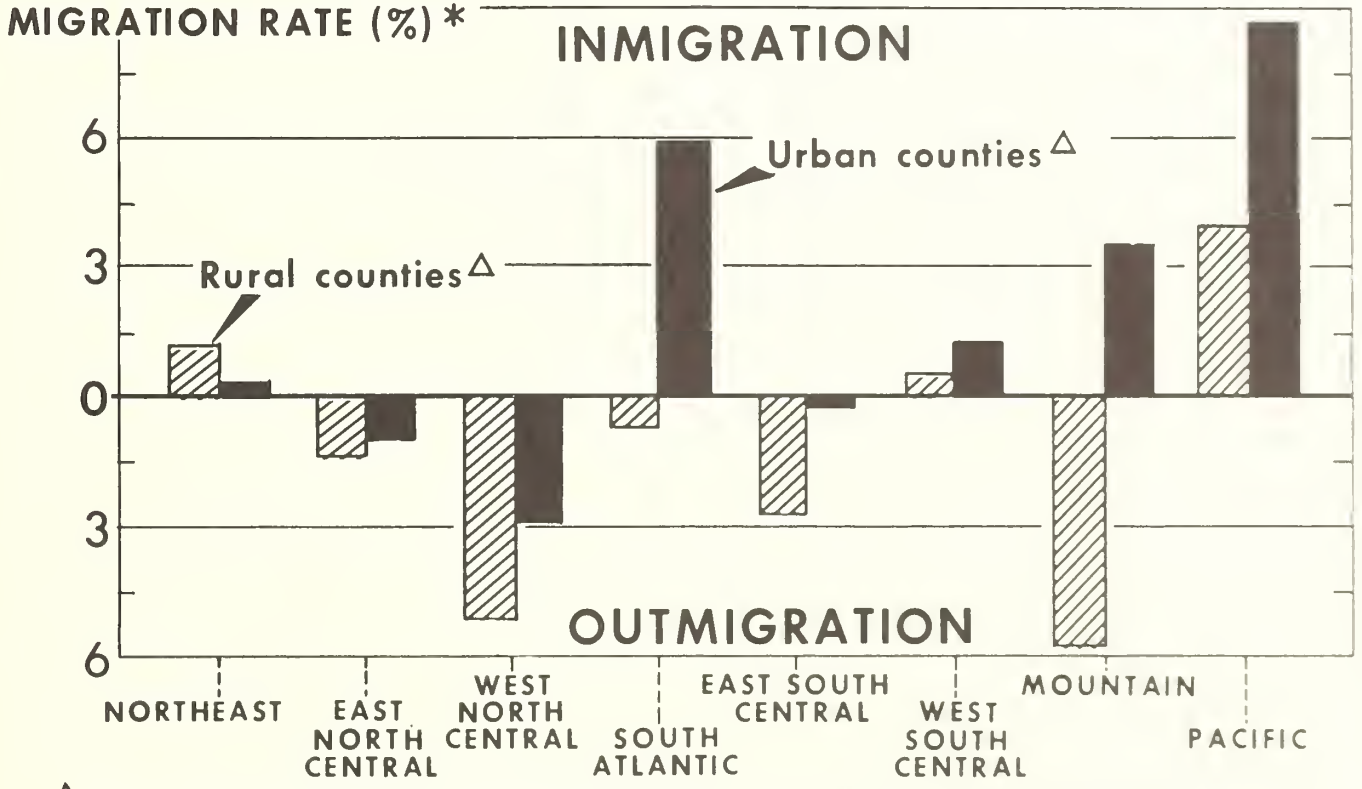
NET MIGRATION FOR GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

Wide variations are evident for 1960-66 in rates of migration for different geographic regions, classed by the urban or rural character of their counties.

There was a high rate of inmovement in urban and rural areas of the Pacific States and urban counties of the South Atlantic States. In contrast, there was a high rate of outmovement from rural areas of the Mountain States of the West and from urban and rural areas of the West North Central States. Net rural outmovement from the South was comparatively minor, except in the East South Central States.

In the Northeast, rural counties had a higher rate of net inmovement than did urban counties. In all other regions, the ability of urban counties to retain or attract population was greater than that of rural counties.

NET MIGRATION FOR GEOGRAPHIC AREAS, 1960-66



△ COUNTIES WITH MORE THAN HALF OF THEIR POPULATION CLASSED AS RURAL OR URBAN IN 1960.

* NET MIGRATION EXPRESSED AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE 1960 POPULATION. DATA FROM BUREAU OF THE CENSUS.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NEG. ERS 7055-69 (9) ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

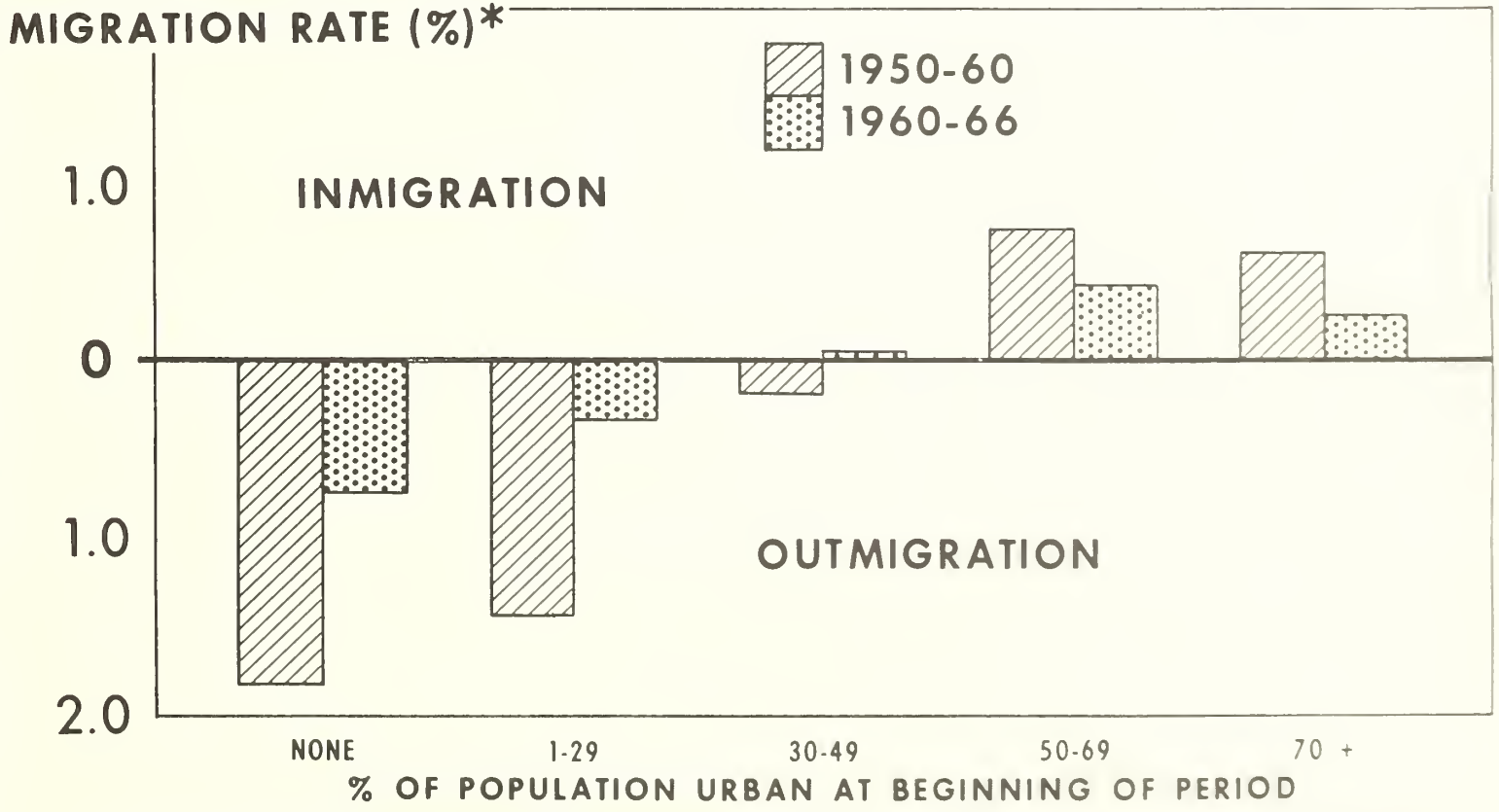
NET MIGRATION BY DEGREE OF URBANIZATION

Urban counties are more likely than rural counties to have a net inflow of people. Among rural counties, the more completely rural they are the more likely they are to have comparatively heavy outmigration.

The rural-urban pattern of migration has changed in the 1960's, however, compared with the 1950's. The rate of net outmovement from rural areas is far less than it was. In fact, predominantly rural counties in which the urban minority amounted to at least 30 percent of the total population are no longer net losers of population to other larger urban counties.

Among urban counties, the direction of net migration is still into the counties, but the flow is reduced. In the 1950's and 1960's, the highest rate of inmigration has been into urban counties that have sizeable rural minorities, rather than into the most highly urban group (those with 70 percent or more of the people in urban places).

NET MIGRATION 1950-60 AND 1960-66 FOR COUNTIES GROUPED BY DEGREE OF URBANIZATION



* BASED ON ANNUAL AVERAGE NET CHANGE THROUGH MIGRATION PER 100 PERSONS FOR PERIOD INDICATED.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NEG. ERS 7079-69 (10) ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

MIGRATION BY INCOME LEVEL OF COUNTIES

In the 1950's--the latest period for which data on the subject are available--there was a strong relationship between the income level of an area and the pattern of migration. In general, poor and comparatively poor counties experienced net outmigration--and the lower the average income level of the county the higher the rate of outmigration. During the decade, there was net inmigration only in county groups where median family income was more than $6,000 in 1959. Those where family income averaged less than $3,000 typically lost 20 to 30 percent of their people to other areas.

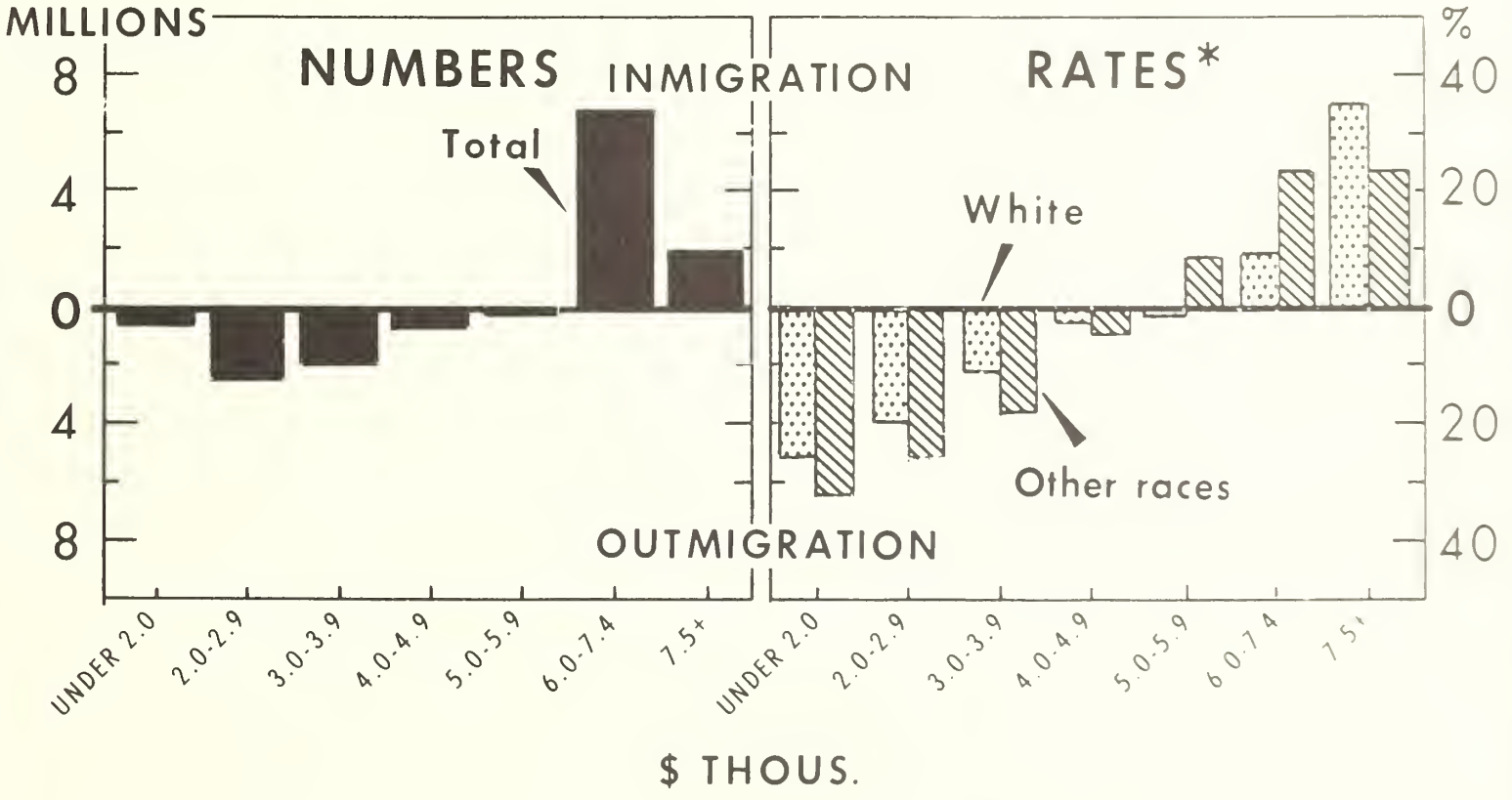
In short, migrants generally move to a more prosperous area.

The pattern varied somewhat for white people and persons of other races. The outmigration rates of whites from low-income counties were less than those of other races. This would seem consistent with the fact that, in the South, most of the capital, land, and other resources for making a reasonable income in a poor county have been in the hands of the white population--so there has been somewhat less economic pressure for whites than blacks to move away.

During the 1950-60 decade, blacks and people of other races moved at a much higher rate than did whites into counties where family income averaged between $5,000 and $7,500. These counties contained many central cities. There was a greater rate of inmovement of whites into the most wealthy class of counties, however. This group includes many of the metropolitan suburban counties where there was heavy settlement of whites during the 1950's.

NET MIGRATION, 1950-60

Counties Grouped by 1959 Median Family Income



SOURCE: ERS-OSU-ARA NET MIGRATION PROJECT.

**CHANGE DUE TO NET MIGRATION EXPRESSED AS A PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS EXPECTED TO SURVIVE TO THE END OF THE DECADE.*

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

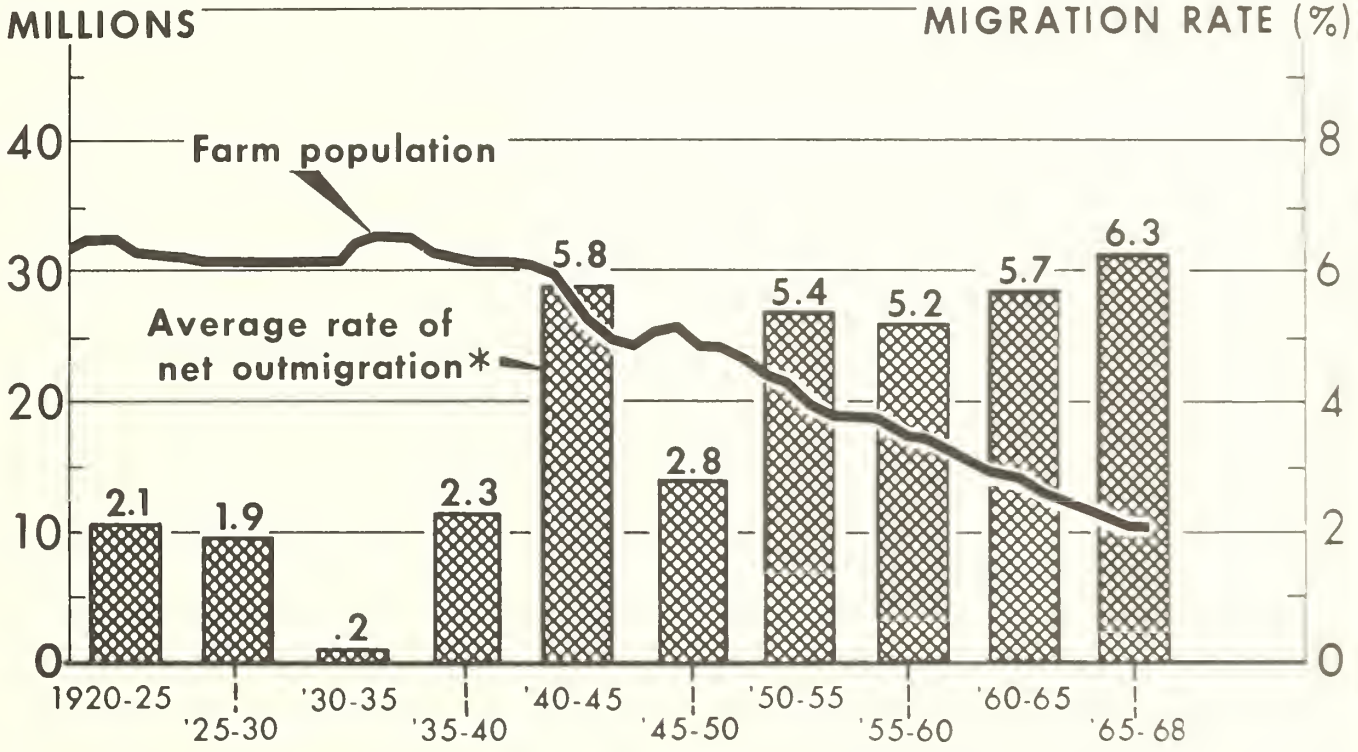
NEG. ERS 3856-69 (11) ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

FARM POPULATION AND RATE OF MIGRATION

More than 32 million people lived on farms in the United States in the early 1930's, and they comprised more than a fourth of the total population. Today, there are little more than 10 million farm people, and they are just 5 percent of the total population.

Since 1940, except for a brief period after World War II, the migration rate of people away from farms has been heavy. In recent years, more than 6 percent of the farm population has left each year.

FARM POPULATION AND MIGRATION, 1920-68



*BASED ON ANNUAL AVERAGE NET CHANGE IN POPULATION THROUGH MIGRATION PER 100 PERSONS IN THE AVERAGE APRIL FARM POPULATION FOR THE PERIOD INDICATED.

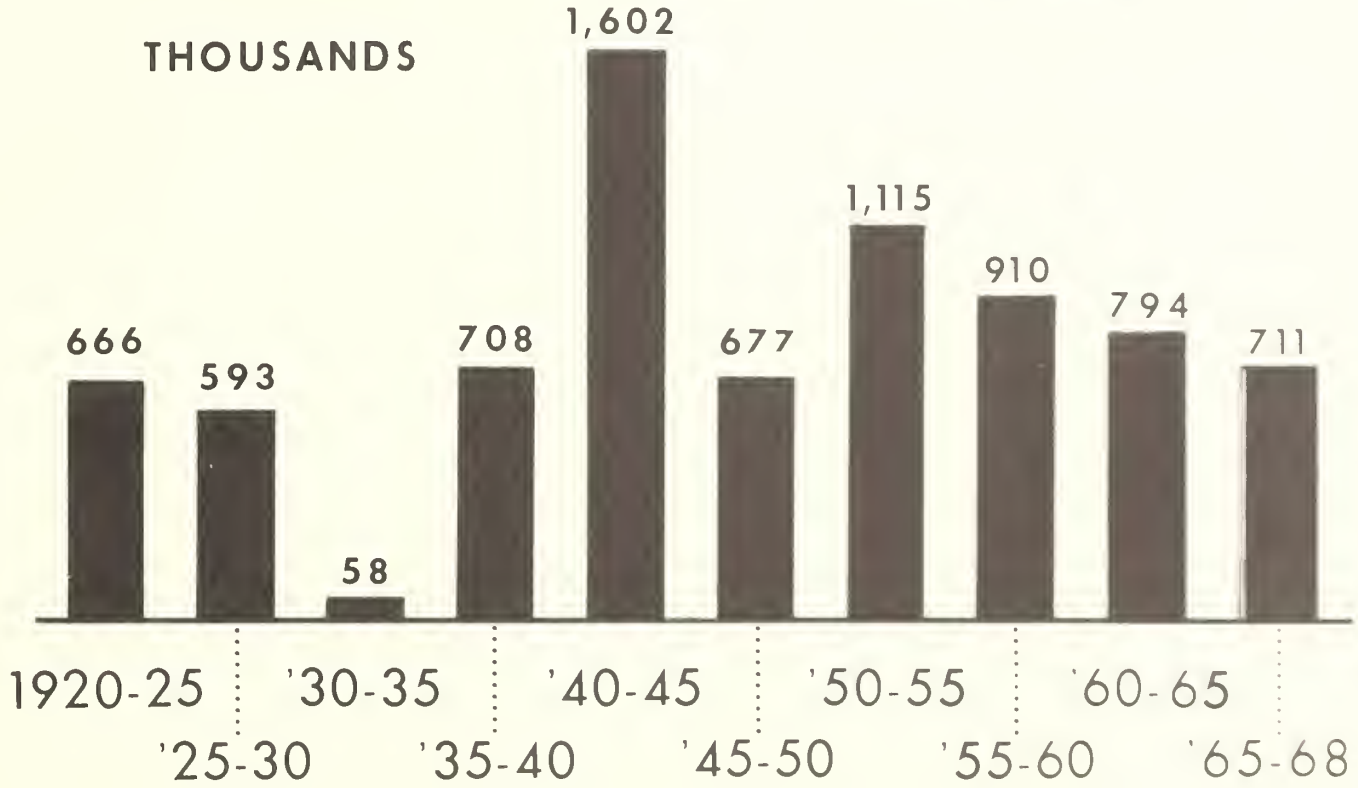
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NEG. ERS 7052-69 (9) ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

MIGRATION FROM FARMS

Although the rate of movement of people away from farms has remained high, the number of people involved has dwindled as the size of the farm population has declined. For example, during World War II an average of 1.6 million people left the farm population annually, compared with 0.7 million annually during 1965-68. Yet with many more people living on farms at the time, the outmigration in 1940-45 amounted to less than 6 percent of the farm population annually. The much smaller numerical loss in very recent years has reflected a loss of more than 6 percent a year.

From the farm point of view, the propensity to migrate has been as high in recent years as ever. Because fewer people are involved, the impact on nonfarm areas of destination has lessened. And with only a third as many people on farms now as in the 1930's, the potential for further large-scale migration from farms is limited.

AVERAGE ANNUAL NET OUTMIGRATION* FROM THE FARM POPULATION



*NET CHANGE THROUGH MIGRATION AND RECLASSIFICATION OF RESIDENCE FROM FARM TO NONFARM.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

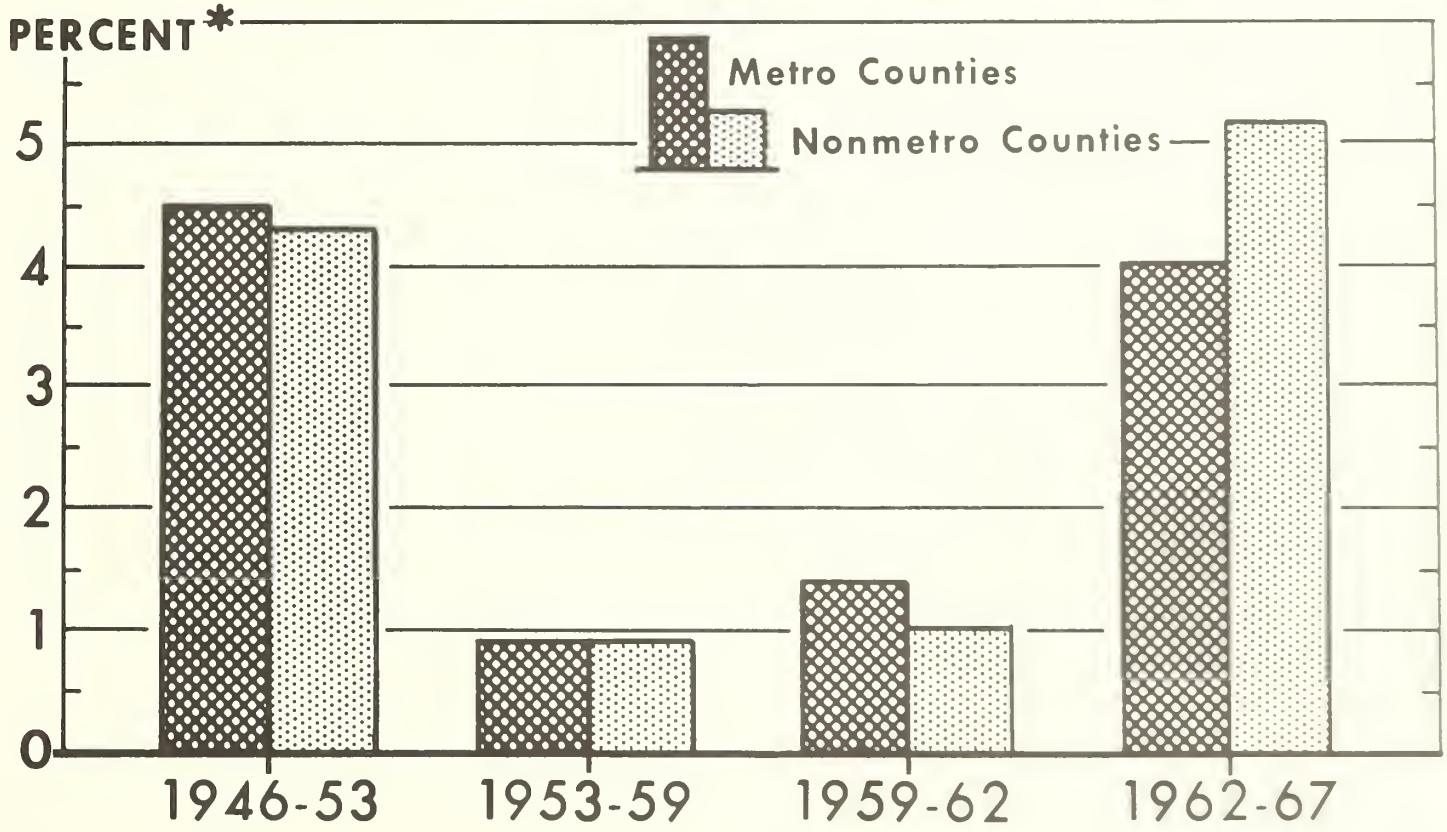
NEG. ERS 2089-69 (5) ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

EMPLOYMENT GROWTH IN PRIVATE NONFARM INDUSTRIES

A major reason for the decreasing rural population loss since 1960 is increasing employment in private nonfarm work, especially in 1962-67, compared with 1953-62. The nonfarm job growth rate has been higher in nonmetropolitan counties (in which a majority of the people are rural) than in metro areas.

In nonmetropolitan counties, private nonfarm employment increased by about 5.2 percent annually during 1962-67, compared with a growth rate of 4 percent in metropolitan areas. In earlier periods, the development of additional nonfarm jobs in nonmetro areas lagged behind or was merely equal to the growth in metro areas. The lower earlier rates of nonmetro job growth were inadequate to offset declines in agricultural work.

EMPLOYMENT GROWTH IN PRIVATE NONFARM INDUSTRIES



DATA ADAPTED FROM COUNTY BUSINESS PATTERNS.

*ANNUAL AVERAGE PERCENT OF GAIN FOR THE PERIOD INDICATED.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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STREAMS OF MIGRATION

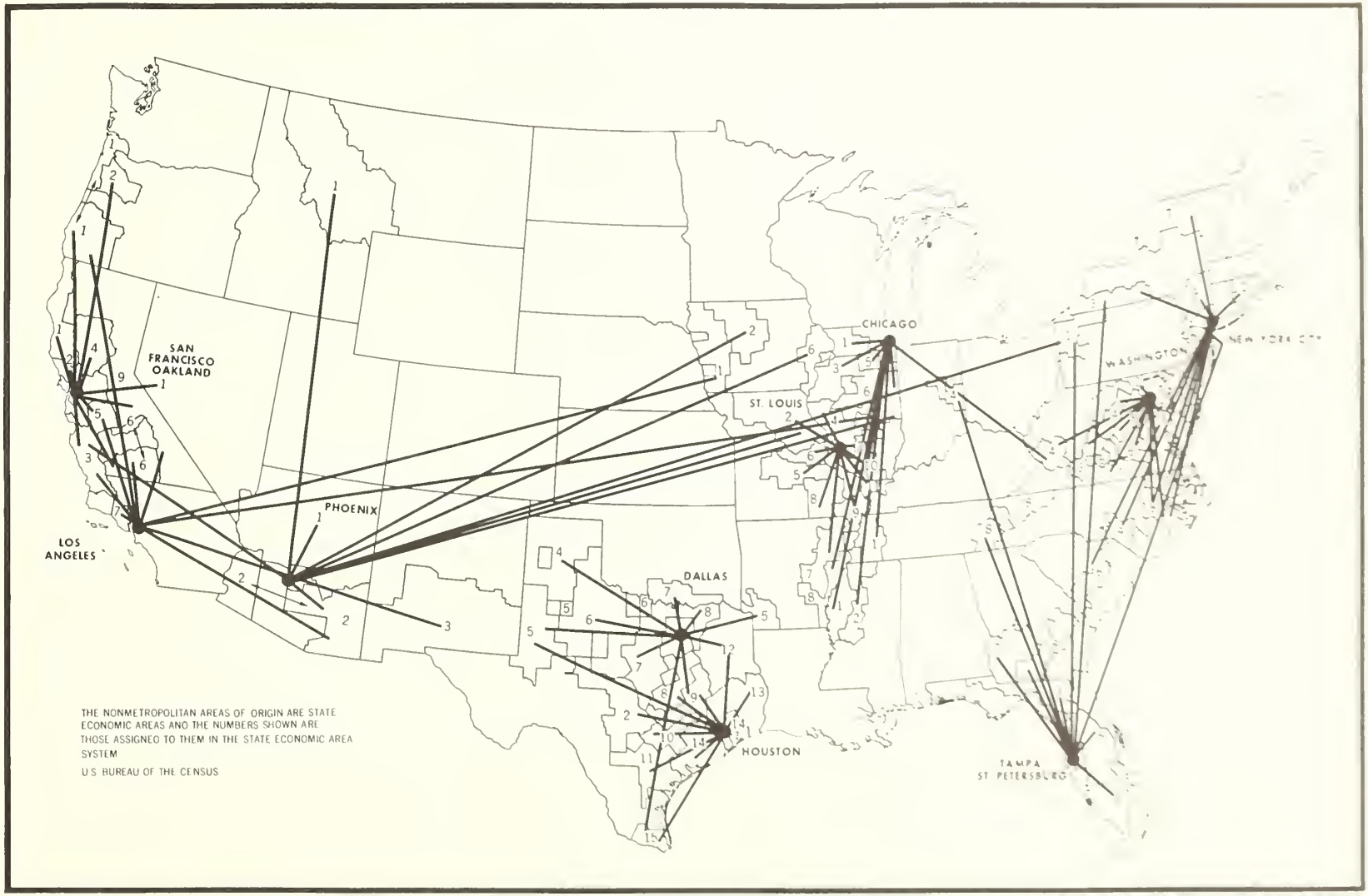
From 1955-60, the 10 metropolitan areas that received the largest number of low-income migrants from nonmetropolitan areas were Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, New York City, Phoenix, St. Louis, San Francisco-Oakland, Tampa-St. Petersburg, and Washington. The accompanying map illustrates the fact that areas draw their migrants from different parts of the country.

Some areas, such as Dallas and Houston, primarily attracted migrants from within the home State. Cities such as Chicago and New York drew more heavily from other regions than their own, especially from the Lower South. Areas that attracted many migrants for retirement or because of climate, such as Phoenix and Tampa-St. Petersburg, drew people from very long distances.

There is some overlap, among the areas shown, in the sources of nonmetropolitan migrants. For example, Chicago and St. Louis drew from the Mississippi Delta, and New York and Washington attracted people from the North Carolina Coastal Plain. But, in general, the map makes clear that conditions impelling migrants out of a particular nonmetropolitan area are much more likely to have an impact on certain metropolitan areas than on others.

MAJOR STREAMS OF NONMETRO MIGRATION TO SELECTED METRO AREAS, 1955-1960

(THE 10 LARGEST STREAMS OF NONMETRO MIGRATION TO THE 10 METRO AREAS RECEIVING THE LARGEST NUMBER OF NONMETRO LOW-INCOME MIGRANTS, 1955-60)

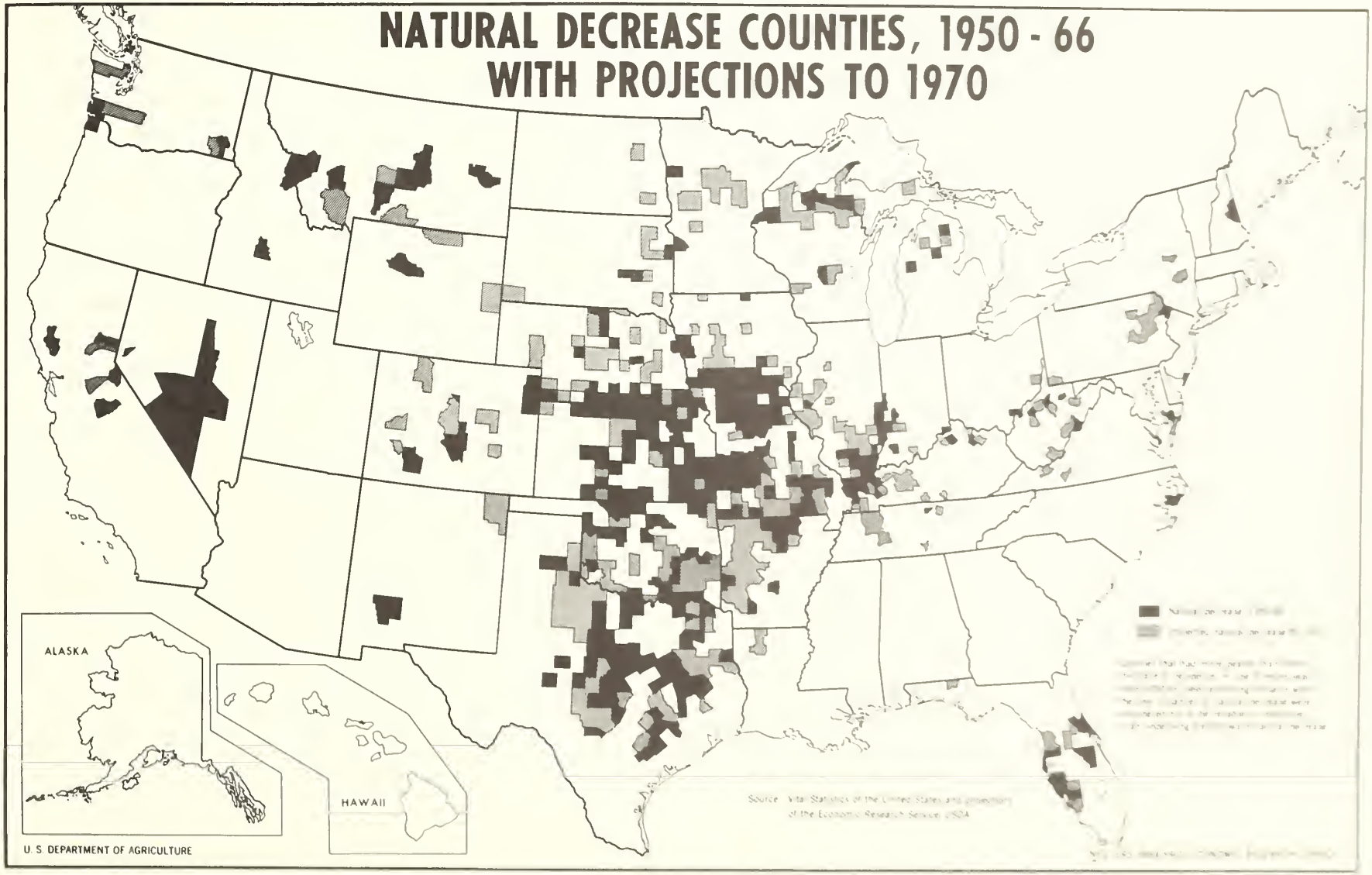


NATURAL DECREASE IN POPULATION

A natural decrease in population--when more deaths than births occur--has been rare in America. In 1967, however, there were more deaths than births in about 345 counties. In 1960, there were only 38 such counties,and in 1950 just two. In most cases, this unusual condition has been caused by prolonged and heavy outmigration of young adults from agricultural or mining counties. The remaining young families of childbearing age produced a normal number of children per family, but they have been too few to offset deaths occurring among the much larger older population. In a minority of areas, the excess of deaths has been due solely to the existence of retirement communities, such as in Florida.

Most counties now experiencing a natural decrease in population, because of the severity of past outmigration, are in the center of the country. In sizeable contiguous groups of counties in Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Texas, and Illinois, there have been fewer births than deaths.

It is expected that by 1970 more than 500 counties will have a natural decrease in population. This is more a startling symbol of distortion of the normal age composition than it is a problem in itself. But it usually reflects conditions in which great difficulty is being experienced in obtaining new sources of employment or in retaining the present population level.


NATURAL DECREASE COUNTIES, 1950 - 66
WITH PROJECTIONS TO 1970
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